

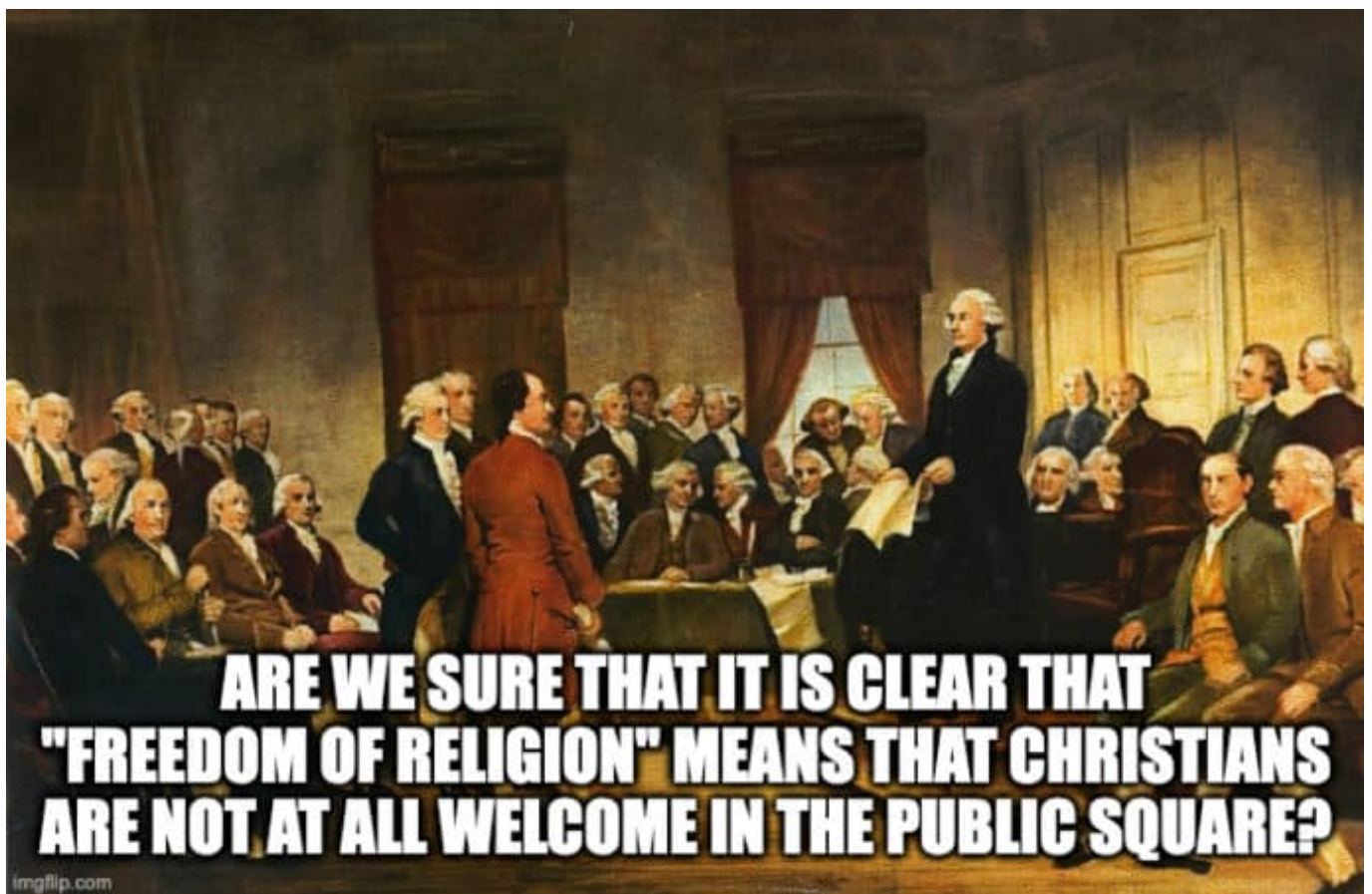
# A Brief Scattershot Primer on Christian Nationalism

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We should begin with the recognition that naming is warfare. In any cultural collision, each group wants to name the other one, and each group wants to prevent the other group from taking that name and turning it around to be used in a less pejorative sense, or even in a positive sense. *Methodist* and *Puritan* were originally names that were taunts from outside those communities, but which were soon enough rendered innocuous. In our day, the mud-gobbing that calls conservative Christians names like white supremacist, or theo-fascist, or religious

extremist are so overdone that they are easily answered and then dismissed. Some are so out there that they can simply be answered with a cheerful roll of the eyes. But another taunt they are now using—Christian nationalist—can be easily caught and thrown right back to them. I am a Christian, and I do love my nation. Now what?

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I am a Christian, and I am not a globalist. I am a Christian, and I am not a tribalist. I am a Christian and I have to live somewhere. What shall we call that?

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The one possible toxin in the phrase *Christian nationalism* is found in that pesky suffix *-ism*. As the fellow said, beware all *isms* except for prisms. Christian conservatives are hostile to ideologies, and “Christian nationalism” *can* be made to function in such a troublesome ideological way. But if we take care to define our terms, and guard our hearts against the poison of party spirit, we should be all right.

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But those on the right who gladly welcome sobriquets like Christian nationalist, but who then receive it like it was the very latest blasphemous selection from the fruit of the month club, with all the cherries, my only word to them is that they should repent and knock it off. Just a word. Driving your pick-up around town with that huge Trump flag flapping on one side, and the Let’s Go Brandon in the original Greek waving on the other . . . isn’t helping anything.

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A *Christian* nation should never be mistaken as the same thing as being a *chosen* nation. There is no exceptionalism in it. In the Old Testament era, Israel was God’s chosen nation, and the other nations were not. But in the era of the new covenant, the commandment that Christ left for us meant that we were to disciple *all* the nations. The first Christian nation (which was probably Armenia) was not an only child. She was simply the eldest, knowing that there were going to be lots of other kids. And as that family fills out, God doesn’t want us squabbling about which one is the greatest, any more than Jesus wanted His disciples to argue about that same thing on the road to Jerusalem. So the “American exceptionalism” of the neo-cons is actually the idolatrous construct. What we are urging is simply one more

Christian nation among many, and to God be the glory.

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Secular nationalism recognizes no authority above itself, and hence is in essence idolatrous. Christian nationalism recognizes a transcendental authority over all nations, an authority that is before time, above history, and entirely outside the world, and which views all of our haughtiness as risible Ozymandian hubris. “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing” ([Isaiah 40:15](#)).

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In the meantime, down here on earth, you cannot teach children to have respect for other cultures by inculcating in them a contempt for their own. A son who honors his own mother deeply is going to understand why another honorable son wants to honor *his* mother. That makes good sense to him. A man who loves his American heritage in the proper way is going to understand and appreciate it when an Englishman loves his, and a Korean loves his, and an Israeli loves his, and an Argentinian loves his. *As they are all supposed to*. Those who attempt to tear down respect for our own institutions are actually setting in motion a contempt for all institutions everywhere, and so then no one should be surprised when an alumnus of this multicultural curricular farrago heads down to their *alma mater* in order to shoot up the cafeteria. While it is true that both jingoism and nihilism start at home, so does respect. Respect and honor are learned when kids are little, and if you fail to teach it at that point, you are the one graduating fascists and anarchists.

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Mere Christendom is not Christian nationalism. Mere Christendom is the sum total of lots of smaller Christian nationalisms.

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If we were in the business of using red baseball caps as a way of spreading our views, we would not opt for the MAGA hat. Our adversaries are trying to fit us out for a MAC hat—Make America Christian. Our reply to this is that if we are going to say it with hats, we would come up with a MACA hat—Make America Christian *Again*. I italicize *again* for a reason.

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The thing we are trying to accomplish is not an attempt to square the circle. It has been done before. In fact, it has been done multiple times before. The first Christendom had a run of over a thousand years, which I call pretty good.

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And not only has this Christian nationalism thing been done before, it has been done in *America* before. If we succeed, this will not be Christian America. If we succeed, this will be Christian America 2.0. This will be Christian America *again*. This will be America as the prodigal son, tired of the pig food, coming home to his father.

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Unlike the French Revolution, which erased the Christian calendar in order to plunk down their own humanist version, the U.S. Constitution was drafted in the year of our *Lord*, 1789. The Declaration acknowledged our rights are inalienable precisely because they were bestowed on us by our *Creator*. When the Constitution was adopted, nine of the thirteen states had official ties to a Christian denomination. Connecticut had an established Congregational Church down to the 1830's. Whatever else you say about church establishments at the state level (and there *is* room for criticism), you cannot say that it is unconstitutional. Out of the 55 men at the Constitutional Convention, 50 of them were orthodox Christians. In one survey of the political literature of the founding era, it was determined that the apostle Paul was quoted at the same level as were Montesquieu and Blackstone, and Deuteronomy was quoted *twice as much* as John Locke was (Dreisbach, *Reading the Bible With the Founding Fathers*, p. 66). One of the names for the war in English was "the Presbyterian Revolt," and on the floor of Parliament Horace Walpole said that "cousin America has run off with a Presbyterian parson," referring to Witherspoon. Speaking of Witherspoon, that worthy man signed the Declaration, and counted James Madison among his students.

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Everyone who subscribes to the Westminster Confession of Faith is a Christian nationalist. This even applies to the American version of the Westminster, which muted the high octane Christian nationalism of the original British version. In the original it says that it is the duty of the magistrate "to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire,

that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed” (WCF 23.3). This was a bit thick for the American Presbyterians, who held their first General Assembly in Philadelphia in 1789, electing a gent named Witherspoon to be their moderator, and who modified the Westminster to say this: “Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger” (American Westminster 23.3). Also please note. Isaiah’s nursing fathers. Church of our common Lord. Witherspoon. Philadelphia. 1789. These people were all breathing the same air.

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If you know any PCA ministers who are woke, or semi-woke, or just simply political squishes, try not to rib them too much about all this stuff. They probably feel bad enough about it already, especially since they have had so many opportunities to take an exception to the American Westminster, at who knows how many meetings of presbytery, and yet they refused to distance themselves from this element of their theo-fascist past. They are probably wracked with guilt over this confessional issue anyhow, and we should probably just lay off.

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One last thing. There is no such entity as the Judeo/Christian religion. As *religions* go, there is no way to combine the view that Jesus is the Christ with the idea that He was a fraud, or the claim that He rose from the dead with the counterclaim that He did nothing of the kind, or the idea that the New Testament correctly interprets the Old with the view that it is the Talmud that actually does. So as *religions*, they do not harmonize at the most basic level. But what then is the Judeo/Christian tradition? Orthodox Christianity and orthodox Judaism both make transcendental claims, claims that outrank the pretensions of modern, secular man. The Judeo/Christian *tradition* was therefore a device used by secular man to get Christians and Jews to drop or mute their claims about that authority being from outside the world. This follows because if you establish this amalgam tradition down here when the transcendental claims are contradictory, then that means you don’t need to take either Christianity or Judaism seriously as a basis for governance. You have spiked the transcendental guns. The Judeo/Christian

tradition therefore operates from within the system, and for a number of years has occupied an honored spot on secular man's designated god shelf—mementos and knick knacks from the past. A Judeo/Christian lap dog cannot stand up to the secular onslaught because the Judeo/Christian lap dog was first domesticated by secularism, and it has been that way for a long time. So while conservative Christians and conservative Jews can certainly work together to challenge the current threats posed by humanist man, they must do so without kidding themselves—as co-belligerents, as distinct from allies. In order to do this with any kind of consistency, they must both recover an understanding of the transcendental nature of their own central claims. But then again, these ultimate claims are not consistent with each other. So the best thing that could happen at this point would be for conservative Jews to reconsider, seriously, the claims of Christ the Messiah.

And of course, everybody else should do that too.

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